

The Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) Fact Sheet

The Washington Transportation Plan provides a blueprint and strategies to guide decisions and investments needed to develop Washington's transportation system to serve its citizens', communities', and economy's future needs, while safeguarding its environment. The WTP is framed around these strategic issues:

- Safety
- Preservation
- System Efficiency
- Bottlenecks and Choke Points
- Transportation Access
- Building Future Visions
- Freight Movement
- Strong Economy and Good Jobs
- Health and the Environment

What is the WTP?

A required planning document

The WTP is required by law, is updated regularly, and extends at least 20 years into the future. In addition, the Legislature provides guidance to the Transportation Commission for developing the WTP. The Transportation Commission also has the responsibility and opportunity during this update of the WTP to inform the public about what will be accomplished during the next 20 years, as funding is provided, and to clarify the needs that remain. The WTP sets policy guidance for the statewide transportation system – whether state-owned or state interest.

A data driven policy document to guide investment decisions

This update of the Washington Transportation Plan is data-driven, analytically grounded, and organized around key issues that provide decision-makers with solid bases for making choices, particularly about investments to the system. Many investments have multiple benefits across multiple issues. For example, ramp meters can improve system efficiency, reduce delay, and improve safety.

Will the Plan contain a list of projects?

No.

The plan targets strategic investment recommendations at a policy level.

The WTP structure is designed to allow decision-makers and the public to relate principles, policies, and investment programs. The WTP recommends priorities among categories of investments that result in a roster of targeted investments. This priority setting is essential to maximizing investments in our state's key transportation services.

The WTP is intended to provide policy and strategy guidance on how transportation systems are to be managed, to give direction for future transportation programs and investments (operational and capital), and to clarify the state's role in investing in state-interest transportation facilities. State interest facilities are those parts of the transportation system that provide statewide or interregional transportation services that, although not owned by the state, are defined by and within the WTP as areas of state concern.

What period of time does the WTP Cover?

This update covers the years 2007 to 2026.

In the past two years the Legislature and the Governor's have already identified and funded high-priority projects that span much of this period. The Transportation Commission guides the WTP to chart a course consistent with these legislative and executive directions. The program investments that are already identified will expend much of the planned future revenues, yet many needs remain. These additional needs are the reason that this update of the WTP suggests additional targeted investment programs and strategies for the Legislature to consider.

The WTP structure is designed to allow decision-makers and the public to relate principles, policies, and investment programs. The WTP recommends priorities among categories of investments that result in a roster of targeted investments. This priority setting is essential to maximizing investments in our state's key transportation services. WSDOT staff asked what people would like to see in the future. Naturally, not everyone has the same desires but we did hear some common themes.

Safety – “Always a Concern”

Safety—whether on a state highway, local roadway, public transit, rail, ferry, or air—is of paramount importance.

Preservation – “Fix it first”

Most people support taking care of public facilities while it is cost-effective and recognize that preservation funding for today’s new facilities will be needed later.

System Efficiency – “Getting the Most from What We Have”

Efficiency measures such as Incident Response, signal coordination and traveler information—like providing actual travel times—are widely supported.

Bottlenecks and Choke Points – “Targeting Congestion Relief”

Congestion is a common frustration—although perception of “congestion” varies statewide. Eliminating or reducing bottlenecks (i.e., undersized bridges, rail crossings, border crossings) and reducing congestion are high priorities.

Transportation Access – “Connecting People and Communities”

Areas of concern expressed include transportation for the elderly and low-income workers, and rural loss of regional air, bus, or rail service.

Building Future Visions – “Where We Are Going”

Although opinions vary on what the future transportation systems should look like, defeat of Initiative 912 (to eliminate new gas taxes) might be a sign that voters are willing to step up and pay for the state’s future transportation needs.

Current efforts underway include a Transportation Commission led tolling study which is evaluating value pricing for system management and their rail study is addressing a variety of freight and passenger rail issues to define the state’s role in investment.

In addition the Department is discussing the benefits of a long range comprehensive Capital Investment Plan (CIP) to establish and stabilize revenue needs and supplies. The CIP is tool to outline the long term needs and timing of investments. It will assist in clarifying system investment needs and provide decision makers in the governor’s office, the state legislature and at local levels, increasing ability to make strategic investments that will serve the long term needs of the transportation system users and ensure that the correct projects are funded in a logical order.

Freight Movement – “Moving the Goods”

The ability to move freight—particularly to access ports and cross Snoqualmie Pass—is a high priority. Rural agricultural areas expressed concerns about short line rail abandonment and the need to complete their all-weather road system.

Strong Economy and Good Jobs – “Growing Opportunity”

Several regions would like to understand more about the state’s commitment to rail and feel that policy development and cost/benefit analysis is needed to compare rail and water transport investments to roadway investments.

Health and the Environment – “Sustaining Quality of Life”

People want transit-oriented development and strong bike/pedestrian networks. The state has a strong environmental commitment.

What is the WTP Schedule?

The Update is schedule to be completed in summer 2006.

The Draft Plan is expected to be ready for public comment in the spring of 2006.
The Final Plan is expected to be available in the summer of 2006.

Additional Information is available online at www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/wtp

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